

REMARKS

Claims 1-28 are pending. By this Amendment, claims 1, 3, 10, 12, 13, 15 and 22 are amended and new claims 25-28 are added. The subject matter recited in new claims 25-28 are supported by the specification on page 9, lines 8-31, and Figs. 2-4, for example.

The Office Action acknowledged that a claim for foreign priority was made under 35 U.S.C. §119(a)-(d) or (f). However, the Office Action did not indicate whether all of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received. The certified copies of the priority documents were filed on September 22, 2003, as evidenced by the filing receipt (copy enclosed). Thus, Applicants respectfully request acknowledgement of receipt of all the certified priority documents.

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 5, 9, 10, 12, 13, 17, 21, 22 and 24 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Clark et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,913,691); claims 2, 6, 11, 14, 18 and 23 under 35 U.S.C. §103 over Clark in view of Heberlein et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,361,356); and claims 3, 4, 7, 8, 15, 16, 19 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. §103 over Clark in view of Heberlein and further in view of Underwood et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,504,655). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

In connection with Clark, the Office Action asserts on page 2, "it is inherent that when the attaching means are detached that the electrical connection is changed to a disconnected state," citing col. 5, lines 8-10 of Clark. However, Clark did not disclose changing a high-voltage supply state to the connector when the attaching unit is detached. The Office Action assertion is merely stating that Clark's male and female connectors are disconnected when the cam lever and locking means are disengaged to disconnect the connector. But, claims 1 and 10 recite changing means for changing a state of the electrical connection to a disconnected state; and claims 13 and 22 recite a changing unit changing a high-voltage supply state of the electrical connection between said high-voltage equipment and said connection unit to a

disconnected state. Clark did not disclose or suggest the changing means recited in claims 1 and 10 or the changing unit recited in claims 13 and 22.

In particular, the changing means is recited in means-plus-function format and thus the structure disclosed in the specification should be compared against Clark. At page 10, line 31 - page 11, line 5, the specification discloses that high-voltage interlock control circuit 1100 shuts off a high-voltage supply from the high-voltage power supply 1300 to PCU 1200 when interlock 1400 is open. Thus, connectors 104 connected to the PCU is disconnected from the high-voltage power supply when interlock signal line 110 becomes Hi level when safety bar 106 is detached by removing attachment bolts 116. (See generally pages 9-11 of the specification, for example.)

With respect to claims 13 and 22, Clark did not disclose a changing unit changing a high-voltage supply state of the electrical connection between the high-voltage equipment and the connection unit. Clark did not disclose any changing unit that changes a voltage supply state between a voltage supply source and the male and female connectors.

In view of the above, Clark did not disclose the changing means recited in claims 1 and 10 that changes the state of the electrical connection between the high-voltage equipment and the external equipment by means of the connection means to a disconnected state; or the changing unit recited in claims 13 and 22 that change a high-voltage supply state of the electrical connection between the high-voltage equipment and the connection unit to a disconnected state. The changing means and/or the changing unit shuts off the high-voltage supply to the connection means or connection unit before the connecting means or connecting unit may be touched by removing the attaching means. Thus, the danger of electrical shock caused by touching a high-voltage connection can be prevented.

Heberlein and Underwood also did not disclose the changing means recited in claims 1 and 10 or the changing unit recited in claims 13 and 22. Thus, Underwood and Heberlein did not supply the subject matter lacking in Clark.

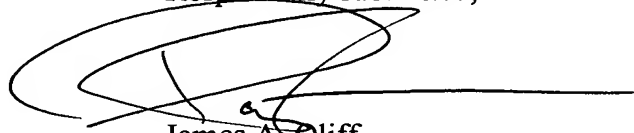
Claims 2-9 depend from claim 1, claims 11 and 12 depend from claim 10, claims 14-21 depend from claim 13 and claims 23 and 24 depend from claim 22. Thus, Clark did not disclose or suggest the subject matter recited in claims 1, 5, 9, 10, 12, 13, 17, 21, 22 and 24; Clark and Heberlein, individually or in combination, did not disclose or suggest the subject matter recited in claims 2, 6, 11, 14, 18 and 23; and Clark, Heberlein and Underwood, individually or in combination, did not disclose the subject matter recited in claims 3, 4, 7, 8, 15, 16, 19 and 20. Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 5, 9, 10, 12, 13, 17, 21, 22 and 24 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b); claims 2-4, 6-8, 11, 14-16, 18-20 and 23 under 35 U.S.C. §103 are respectfully solicited.

New claims 25 and 26 depend from claim 1, and new claims 27 and 28 depend from claim 13. Thus, claims 25-28 are allowable for at least the reasons discussed above in connection with claims 1 and 13.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-28 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'James A. Oliff', written over a horizontal line.

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Attachments:

Amendment Transmittal
Copy of September 22, 2003 PTO Filing Receipt

Date: May 8, 2006

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